NEWFANGLES

Number 10, May 1966. After appearing every month this year, we now make it official: Published MONTHLY by Bob & Maggie Thompson, Mentor, O. 44060, at 15¢ a copy (no subs longer than $1 worth, please) or for usable news items.

REUBEN WINS REUBEN

Eisner's Spirit Best Comic Book

Reuben Goldberg, 83, won the National Cartoonists' Society Reuben award as best cartoonist of the year. Goldberg, for whom the award is named, retired as an editorial cartoonist a couple of years ago to concentrate on humorous sculpture. The Reuben itself is a piece of humorous sculpture designed by Goldberg and executed by NEA editorial cartoonist Bill Crawford, whose wife (reportedly) suggested the name. Goldberg was nominated for an NCS award in the "special features" category, but lost to Hal Foster's Prince Valiant (other nominee: Bill Holman's Smokey Stover).

Will Eisner won an NCS award for best comic book with The Spirit, beating out Wally Wood for Witzend and Bill Gaines/Jack Davis for Mortis Mailer. As with TV's Emmy awards, this went to a cancelled show: Harvey's Spirit lasted but ten issues.

Other awards: STORY STRIP--John Prentice, Rip Kirby (over Stan Drake's Heart of Juliet Jones, Alex Kotzky's Apartment 3-G). HUMOR STRIP--Johnny Hart, B.C. and The Wizard of Id (over Charles Schulz' Peanuts, Bob Montana's Archie). EDITORIAL--Karl Hubenthal (over Bill Mauldin, John Fischetti). SPORTS--Lou Darvas, Cleveland Press (over Bill Gallo, N.Y. News, and Willard Mullin, freelance). MAGAZINE GAGS--Orlando Busino (over Elden Dedini, Jack Tippit). SYNDICATED PANELS--Bil Keane, Family Circus and Channel Chuckles (over Jim Berry's Berry's World, Bob Dunn's They'll Do It Every Time). ADVERTISING & ILLUSTRATION--Roy Doty (over Dick Hodgins Jr. and Ronald Searle). (Note surprise: two-time NCS award winner Jim Berry.)

OBITUARIES

RUDOLPH DIRKS, 81, creator of The Katzenjammer Kids, died April 20 in New York City. The Kids began in 1897 (based on Wilhelm Busch's Max and Moritz), which makes them the oldest existing comic characters. After a split with Hearst, Dirks retained rights to the characters but lost the title to Hearst, who had the strip continued by the very capable H. H. Knerr and a series of less capable cartoonists. Dirks continued the strip as The Captain and the Kids for United Features. John Dirks, son of the creator, has worked with his father on the strip for years, will keep it going.

ANTHONY BOUCHER (real name: William Anthony Parker White), 55, died in California April 30. Boucher, founding and still best ever editor of The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction (the NYTimes said he edited "a couple" issues of F&SF; he edited 87) was most widely known as a mystery critic. Completely devoid of snobbery, Boucher gave good reviews to such items as Mickey Spillane and Russ Jeeves' comic-book adaptation of Dracula.

GOLD KEY COMICS NOW SELL FOR 15¢ in New York City and on the West Coast, apparently testing customer reaction to the price increase. We get conflicting reports, but there doesn't seem to be any difference in sales because of the 3¢ difference.

Fire at Thailing's House

Fire, the particular dread of the collector, struck Comic-collector Bill Thailing's Cleveland home last month. Cause, said Bill, was an overloaded electrical wire which started a blaze in the attic. The fire was partially controlled by a glass globe fire extinguisher which exploded with a noise which woke Bill and his family. Damage was several hundred dollars, but that wasn't the end of it. The fire inspector ordered complete rewiring--another several hundred dollars--and had to be talked out of ordering Bill to get rid of his comic strips and collection of comics, books and magazines. He finally compromised by asking Bill install many dollars worth of steel shelving to accomodate them.

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REVIEWS

The Spectacular Spider-Man (35¢) is a large, black-and-white version of the comic--no different, except in format. I doubt the Comics Code would have made any changes.

The Code would have gone into screaming fits over Mile Name is...Savage! The artwork is Gil Kane's best, the story is well-written--well-written for the pulp magazines. It also contains more unnecessary brutality than you'll find outside Mickey Spillane. For this reason, it is not being carried by a lot of newsstands.

Creepy #1 is Parente's first and it is better than anyone who saw his overpriced, under-literate "tribute" to EC in a Rocket's Blast Special could reasonably expect. It's not good, mind, just not that bad, except for the criminally inept "adaptation" of H. P. Lovecraft's The Rats in the Walls. The tasteless gore added, the hopeless muddling of the storyline and the execrable drawing of Bob Jenney, in my honest opinion, leave Lovecraft's literary executor, August Derleth, no choice but to sue, not only for copyright infringement (the story is not in the public domain) but for irreparable damage to Lovecraft's literary reputation. Parente's story in this issue is the only good new story in the magazine. A warning, incidentally, to potential contributors (see price scale, preceding page)--for that less-than-munificent sum, you are relinquishing all rights. Warren does not pay again when he reprints material. Also, authors risk having their stories drawn by Bob Jenney, which stops me from trying to crack the market.

--Don Thompson

CHANGES OF ADDRESS: Jan Ingersoll, Shaker Hts., O. 44120
John Broomma, c/o John Ryan, Fairfield NSW, Australia 2165
Andy Zerbe, Montgomery, Ala. 36106
--we're still trying to locate Ken Keller--

Carlsonized Xenozine #8 is available for 50 from Ed Aprill Jr., Ann Arbor, Mich. 48103. Contains the first 30-odd strips of Modesty Blaise and James Bond vs. Goldfinger and a like amount of the first Russ Manning Tarzan newspaper strip and the first Al Williamson Secret Agent Corrigan strip. This is a final attempt to save this periodical, and a complete format change has been made; it is now the size of Ed's sell-out Funk Beacon and Spirit books. Support of fanzines will keep it going; otherwise it flops and dealers make a fortune selling copies at 5 times cover price within a decade. Copies of the first issue (which contains the same sequences of Modesty and Bond in a less wieldy format) are still available to completists and speculators at $2 each from Ed.

Castle of Frankenstein #12, on sale now, contains a good interview with Stan Lee, some amateur comics and the first-and-only appearance of the comics council. This latter was a grouping of some ill-assorted unpaid experts (ye editors didn't get so much as contributors' copies) who rate a bunch of old comics. Trouble is, the comics were new when the ratings were written. Most contented themselves with a numerical system (so many stars is good, so many more is great), but a few, the male half of MF's staff included, went on at length about specific issues. Not a bad idea, perhaps, and it may be continued in a fanzine (we'll let you know).

THE ACADEMY IS NOT QUITE DEAD--if you want to try to reorganize it, write to Mark Manderfeld, address somewhere on Page 2).

Look had an article on Mad Mar. 19. MF editors would like a copy, please.

Your subscription expires with issue #_____. Circulation this issue: 55. We are still actively seeking subscribers; tell your friends about us. We have available a checklist of Dell Special Number titles at $1, plus 10¢ if you want a list of corrections which will be published at a later date. Back issues of #7 available.

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BEN FLETCHER HAS BEEN DRAFTED from the U.S. Army due to poor eyesight. Remember when your folks said all that reading would ruin your eyesight? Heh, heh.

RATIONAL COMICS WILL NEVER PARTICIPATE and plug conventions, says OTOH. Try them.

RATHER THAN LEAVE THE REST OF THIS PAGE BLANK, some letters of comment...

Bruce Anderson: Unlike the other companies, Charlton lists exact numbers of subscribers, without rounding off. They get credit for the comic with the fewest subscribers--Army War Heroes, with 3 average for the 12 months, 9 at time of filing. Marvel has been about the only company to publish statements without figures this year. The few they did print surprised me. I had expected that with so many comics featuring original stories they were doing better than Gold Key, which uses mainly reprints in all their funny titles except for a few Disneys. However, each of the Marveys reporting had under 200,000 paid circulation. A reflection of this may be their dropping one of their 4 monthly titles and 9 of 14 bimonthlies last winter (a significant drop in newsstand pollution).

Bill Spicer: King never did have much to offer; aside from the Al Williamson Flash Gordons, their stories and art were bottom-rung stuff, typical of what's wrong with the industry today and why it's pushing closer and closer to the edge of extinction. King's publishing philosophy is summed up very well by their Advertising Age promotions, in which they offer a "Comic Book Planning Kit" for businesses that wish to advertise via the comics format; and it's clear that King thinks of their syndicated strips--and the form itself--in terms of Advertising Product. Quality? Their idea of quality is Bill Lignante drawing The Phantom--and a Kellerbach Paper Co. Comicbook brochure on the side.{...}Syndicates are living so far in the past--at least 25 years--that it's no wonder the adventure strip in newspapers (and comic books) is dying. They're still trying to do 1930. And the King comics are nothing more nor less than extensions of syndicate thinking--as out of date as their newspaper adventure strips. So I won't say I'm too sorry to see them leave the field. My only regret is that the Jeff Jones Flash Gordon will probably never see print; it must've had some exceptionally fine artwork.{...} When the Batman tv show hits the re-run trail, unfortunately for DC, their circulation leader will deflate to a more typical, average, sales level...and without any substantial gains in other titles' sales (judging by their new stuff, circulation improvement doesn't look probable), '68 may be a repeat of '67. It'll take DC a while to admit publicly that it's all over for the 12-cent, conventional, comic. At Marvel, they're at least doing something about it. {from a later letter} Raising cover prices to 15¢ isn't the answer; it's all over for the 12¢ and the 15-center. The war they're fighting is simply one of a diminishing readership, and a price hike is only a temporary measure to try and make it with what they've got. But the real answer is to get the readers they should have by branching out into new books and new formats--not slinging to the kid audience.{...} I just wonder, though, who {Marvel thinks} their readers will be for the new Spiderman; the package, including the ads, suggests a late teens and 20's readership--and yet the story itself is a typical, 12-cent-comic Spiderman. Too, Stan Lee might become a victim of the generation gap if he's trying to sell to the older readers; his "hip talk" is right out of those '30s and '40s Hollywood college musicals...{a still later letter} All it'll take is one 35-50¢ magazine to hit the jackpot.{...} Sooner or later, someone is going to do it right, and when that happens there'll be dozens of imitations all over the place--most of them imitating the wrong things, like the Playboy simulations that can never hope to catch up, with maybe one or two fairly good second-rate and the rest scrabbling at the bottom. {It' all due early in June}